

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 7346

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, IR
SUBJ: RESIGNATION OF TEHRAN'S MAYOR NIKPAY - ANOTHER
INDICATION OF HIGH LEVEL GOI CONCERN

SUMMARY: THE INDUCED RESIGNATION OF TEHRAN'S CONTROVERSIAL
MAYOR UNDER ATTACK FOR SOME OF THE CITY'S ILLS UNDERLINES
ROYAL DISPLEASURE AND PROBABLE CONCERN OVER CONTINUING
POPULAR COMPLAINTS TRIGGERED BY TEHRAN'S LINGERING ELECTRIC
POWER SHORTAGE. END SUMMARY.

1. TEHRAN'S CONTROVERSIAL MAYOR GHOLAM REZA NIKPAY TENDERED
HIS RESIGNATION TO THE CITY COUNCIL AUG 16. THE COUNCIL
ACCEPTED IT AND IMMEDIATELY ELECTED JAVAD SHAHRESTANI AS
NEW MAYOR. NIKPAY THUS ENDED EIGHT YEARS IN OFFICE, DURING
WHICH TEHRAN HAS MORE THAN DOUBLED IN POPULATION AND NIKPAY
HIMSELF HAS FREQUENTLY BEEN THE CENTER OF CONTROVERSY.

2. THE ENERGETIC, VOLUBLE MAYOR WAS REMARKABLY SILENT ON
THE REASONS FOR HIS RESIGNATION. WE HAVE REPORTS THAT H
AS TELLING THE PRESS HE DID NOT PLAN TO RESIGN ONLY A
FEW DAYS AGO. ON AUG. 15, FARSI LANGUAGE PRESS
PUBLISHED A DIRECT ATTACK ON NIKPAY BY TAQI MOSSADEQI,
CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL IRANIAN GAS COMPANY, WHO BLAMED
NIKPAY'S SHORTSIGHTEDNESS FOR GAS LINE SHORTAGES IN THE
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CITY (AND BY IMPLICATION SOME OF THE TRAFFIC PROBLEMS).
THIS SORT OF DIRECT ATTACK IS EXTREMELY RARE IN IRAN'S
CAREFULLY MUTED PRESS, AND IT IS EQUALLY UNCHARACTER-
ISTIC OF NIKPAY TO REFRAIN FROM A TELLING RETORT. WHILE
ALL OUR INFORMATION IS NOT YET IN, THESE FACTORS MAKE IT
PRETTY CLEAR THAT NIKPAY WAS FORCED TO RESIGN BY DECISION
OF THE HIGHEST AUTHORITY (I.E., THE SHAH).

3. NIKPAY'S RESIGNATION IS SOMEWHAT SIMILAR IN MANY WAYS TO MINISTER MAJIDI'S DEMISE FROM THE CABINET. WE ARE TOLD ON PRETTY GOOD AUTHORITY MAJIDI'S PLAN AND BUDGET ORGANIZATION HAS BEEN BLAMED FOR SHORTSIGHTEDNESS IN REFUSING TO ALLOCATE FUNDS TO ELECTRIC POWER PROJECTS REQUESTED SOME YEARS AGO BY THE ENERGY MINISTER OF THE TIME. COLLATERAL REPORTS WE ARE GETTING INDICATE THAT THE ELECTRICITY DISRUPTIONS ARE WORRYING NOT ONLY POLITICAL AUTHORITIES HERE BUT ALSO THE POLICE/SECURITY APPARATUS WHICH FEARS POSSIBLE REPERCUSSIONS AMONG THE STUDENT POPULATION.

4. NEW MAYOR SHAHRESTANI SERVED ONE YEAR AS MAYOR IN 1968-1969 BEFORE BECOMING A PROVINCIAL GOVERNOR AND SUBSEQUENTLY MINISTER IN THE HOVEYDA CABINET. HE ALSO WON A "MAYOR OF THE YEAR" NATIONAL AWARD FOR HIS SERVICE AS MAYOR OF MASHAD JUST PRIOR TO COMING TO TEHRAN. WHILE SHAHRASTANI BRINGS TO HIS NEW JOB OBVIOUS CREDENTIALS AND A GOOD IMAGE IN MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION, WE REMEMBER THAT THE MINISTRY OF ROADS UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP WAS NOT A NOTABLY EFFICIENT ORGANIZATION. TOP LEVEL DIRECTION WAS FREQUENTLY LACKING AND PRIORITIES BECAME CONFUSED.

5. MEANWHILE, NEW ENERGY MINISTER TAVAKOLI HAS ANNOUNCED NEW GOVERNMENT MEASURES TO INCREASE THE NATIONAL ELECTRICITY-
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CITY SUPPLY BUT IS WARNING THAT CONSERVATION OF ELECTRICITY MUST CONTINUE FOR SOME TIME IN VIEW OF THE DANGER OF RECURRING SHORTAGES. IN A REVERSAL OF PREVIOUS POLICY, THE GOI IS ALSO ENCOURAGING THE INSTALLATION AND OPERATION OF PRIVATE ELECTRIC GENERATORS IN FACTORIES AND OTHER LARGE ENTERPRISES.

6. ALL THIS SUGGESTS CONSIDERABLE HIGH-LEVEL CONCERN HERE WITH THE EFFECTS OF A POWER SHORTAGE WHICH--ACCORDING TO EVIDENCE SLOWLY COMING TO LIGHT--IS LIKELY TO LINGER WITH US FOR QUITE SOME TIME.
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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